United Nations S/PV.7425

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7425th meeting
Thursday, 9 April 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Kawar	(Jordan)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Letter dated 2 January 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/3)

Letter dated 16 March 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/187)

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2015/219)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2015/219)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/219, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, as well as to documents S/2015/3 and S/2015/187, containing letters dated 2 January 2015 and 16 March 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for giving me the opportunity to brief the Council on Mali at a time that I think it is fair to call a key moment in the political process. I would like to complement the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2015/219) by focusing on three points: the dialogue process, the security situation and the strengthening of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Concerning the political process, as the Secretary-General explains in his report, in February the Malian parties held a fifth session of the inter-Malian dialogue in Algiers. On 1 March, two of the three parties initialled the draft peace agreement submitted to them by the mediators in indication of their agreement with it. The third party, known as the Coordination, asked for more time to consult its base, while negotiations continued between it and the mediators. This past week, the head of the mediation, the representative of Algeria, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hamdi met with the Coordination leadership in Algiers. At that time, the Coordination indicated that it would be initialing the agreement next week. However, that is just an statement of intent; it has not actually happened yet.

What we can gather from all this is that the crisis in Mali can be resolved only through an inclusive and viable political agreement that can be effectively implemented. The draft currently on the table provides a good basis for the resolution of many issues that have been at the heart of the Malian conflict for so many years. An agreement is only one step in a long process, and it is important that all parties fully commit to following through with the process to its conclusion. I therefore think that, more than ever, it is important to urge the Malian parties to continue their dialogue to address outstanding issues and to commit to the process that will follow the signing of the agreement, which we all hope to see. In that context, the international community has an important role to play in facilitating and supporting the dialogue. However, allow me to say that, ultimately, the people of Mali are responsible for ensuring peace.

I therefore believe this is a historic opportunity to reach a political settlement. It is historic because, with regard to previous efforts to resolve the Malian crisis, this is the first time that the international community has mobilized to provide its support. There is really an alignment of the stars, if I may use the expression, which is a first in the history of Mali, and there is a desire to support Mali. I therefore think that this message must continue to be conveyed. All Malians must take ownership of this process, and that is how we will be able to move forward.

Of course, one of the crucial aspects now will be the establishment of a precise and detailed framework and timeline for the implementation of the peace process. Clear and robust implementation mechanisms

are also necessary because there is a lack of confidence among the Malian parties. I think peace is attainable, and intensive efforts to that end should be undertaken in the upcoming weeks.

Unfortunately, the security situation is fragile — not only in northern Mali, but also in other parts of the country. This insecurity has a direct impact on civilians' safety and hinders the re-establishment of State authority, humanitarian access and stabilization programmes.

While preparations for the fifth round of talks in Algiers were under way in January, there were violations of the ceasefire on the ground by the parties and serious security threats for civilians. On 19 February, parties recommitted to upholding the ceasefire, which has generally been respected. However, I must take this opportunity to reaffirm that no party should seek to gain ground by military means. It is essential to comply with the ceasefire. Peace in Mali will be achieved only through negotiations, not through military means.

The lack of constructive participation by some of the Malian parties in the ceasefire management bodies is an area of concern. In that regard, I am thinking in particular of the Mixed Technical Commission on Security and the joint observation and verification teams. I think it is very important that all parties uphold their ceasefire commitments and participate in those bodies, as that is how we will eventually be able to cover additional ground and gain a better understanding and a deterrent effect on those who violate the ceasefire.

As I stated, there were serious incidents, not just in the north of Mali but also in Bamako on 7 March and in other areas south of the Niger River. Those incidents demonstrate how extremist and criminal elements exploit vacuums of law and order in order to perpetrate their crimes. It is therefore critical that all Malian parties clearly distance themselves from violent and illegal activities. That is the reason that last year we established a cell in MINUSMA tasked with dealing with issues of transnational crime and helping the Malian Government develop its action in that regard. I think that the Security Council's attention and support to issues related to illicit trafficking and criminality are extremely important. It is also important for the countries of the region and all Mali's partners to continue to support MINUSMA and its personnel to enable the Mission to carry out its tasks, including with regard to MINUSMA's supply routes through the territories of neighbouring countries, which are quite helpful to the Mission.

With regard to the situation on the ground, there continue to be attacks. Since our last meeting, three peacekeepers lost their lives. I would like to pay tribute to them and to the police- and troop-contributing countries that sent them to Mali.

With regard to MINUSMA, efforts are ongoing to expand the Mission's presence and operations in the northern regions, pursuant to resolution 2164 (2014). As detailed in the report, the deployment of the Mission's military component has reached 80 per cent, and we are hoping to conclude its deployment with the arrival in next two months of the two battalions that we have been awaiting for so long, but who are now almost fully equipped. I think that the figure of 80 per cent will rise significantly in the two months to come. At the same time, the construction of infrastructure continues, but not under the best conditions because of the ongoing security challenges. This is therefore a work in progress.

We have also continued and strengthened our outreach efforts with local populations, who have often long been polarized as the legacy of intercommunal tensions and political and criminal violence. In this regard, since February we have had a tool that, I believe, will prove to be very useful, and that is MINUSMA radio, whose broadcasts will be expanded in local languages.

We will continue to require financial and technical support from Member States. As discussions on the MINUSMA budget begin in the relevant committees, I believe that a strong signal from the Security Council would have an influence on those upcoming discussions.

In conclusion, I would like to express how much we appreciate the efforts of our partners in the mediation team: Algeria, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other countries. Their efforts have been commendable.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hamdi, and all of our colleagues in MINUSMA are carrying out their duties in very difficult conditions. I would like to briefly express my great appreciation of the work of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Gressly, who is concluding his service as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator and moving on elsewhere, having accomplished a great deal in his two and a half years in Mali.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate Force Commander Major General Lollesgaard, who took up his functions 10 days ago, taking over from General Bikimo of Chad, who had served as Acting Force Commander for several months with great skill.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Let me convey to you, Madam, the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Mali upon the accession of your country, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. At the same time, let me say how proud we are to see a woman from the Middle East presiding over the Security Council. I would also like to pay a just tribute to France for the skill with which it guided the work of the Council last month.

I would also like to express the deepest gratitude of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, and the Government and the people of Mali to our shared Organization, the United Nations, and its Member States for the ongoing, multifaceted support they have provided to the peace process in Mali since January 2012, when the most serious crisis in the history of our country began.

I take this opportunity to express and reaffirm the confidence of the Government of Mali in international mediation, being led by Algeria and comprising the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Chad. I welcome France's role and contribution in Mali and all of the sacrifices that have been made.

I take this opportunity to commend the personal commitment of the Secretary-General to seeking peace and reconciliation in Mali. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. David Gressley for his great service in our country and to wish him the greatest of success in his future endeavours, in Africa or elsewhere.

I extend the heartfelt thanks of the Malian people to all friendly nations and international partner organizations that have shown their solidarity with Mali by sending their children or their experts to defend the values binding us together as humankind. I pay solemn tribute to the memory of those who lost their lives in the line of duty in Mali, defending human dignity, freedom and democracy.

The Government of Mali notes the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on developments in the situation in Mali (S/2015/219), which is before the Council for consideration today. However, we are given pause by the claim that all Malian parties have violated the ceasefire. In this regard, I must underscore that the Government of Mali has never violated the ceasefire. I discussed this very point with my friend Hervé Ladsous yesterday, and I think it would be difficult at this point to offer evidence to support that claim. The verification and observation mechanisms set up for this purpose, the Mixed Technical Commission on Security and mobile joint observation and verification teams, led by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), have never reported any violation of the ceasefire whatsoever by the Malian armed forces or security forces to the Malian authorities.

Council members will recall that, on 25 June 2014 in this very Chamber (see S/PV.7210), the Security Council adopted resolution 2164 (2014), extending the mandate of MINUSMA. In paragraph 4 of that resolution, the Security Council:

> "Reiterates its demand that all armed groups in Mali put aside their arms, cease hostilities immediately, as well as reject the recourse to violence and urges all such groups that have cut off all ties with terrorist organizations and who recognize, without conditions, the unity and territorial integrity of the Malian State, to engage in an inclusive dialogue open to all communities of the North of Mali".

In addition, in paragraph 3 the Council:

> "Urges in particular the Malian authorities to launch without delay an inclusive and credible negotiation process with the signatory and adherent armed groups of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, and those armed groups in the North of Mali that have cut off all ties with terrorist organizations and committed unconditionally to the Agreement".

Finally, in paragraph 7 the Council:

> "Urges further the parties in this negotiation process to coordinate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, with the goal of securing a durable political resolution to the crisis and long-term peace and stability throughout the country, respecting the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Malian State".

Instead of proceeding with a tedious reading of the entire resolution, I would like simply to observe that, by the provisions I have just quoted, the Security Council, in its great wisdom, essentially entrusted to the Malian negotiating parties and the international community the task of playing a three-part symphony on the stage of peace and long-term reconciliation in Mali.

While the Government of Mali has fully and completely played its part by engaging in good faith in the peace process launched on 16 July in Algiers and initialling, at the same time as the Platform of northern movements, the agreement submitted to the parties by the international mediation, the Coordination of northern movements did not do likewise, instead refusing to go in that direction, despite numerous calls from the international community. This attitude betrays a great defiance of the international community, which through the mediation had spent eight long months of intense effort, sacrifice and patience to bring peace and stability to Mali and the region.

I recall to underscore this fact that, in accordance with relevant provisions of resolutions and declarations of the Security Council, the Government of Mali, under the guidance of the Head of State, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, engaged in inclusive inter-Malian talks under the auspices of the Algerian-led international mediation. After eight long months of intense negotiations, the parties to the inclusive inter-Malian talks concluded and initialed a draft agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali, with the exception of our brothers from the Coordination of movements, who asked for additional time to consult with their base.

For its part, the Government of Mali has always honoured its commitments. Indeed, in initialing the draft agreement, with full responsibility — and despite the fact that its memorandum, which included 12 pages of amendments and was distributed to members of the international mediation, was not taken into account — the Government of Mali has shown good faith in seeking a dynamic compromise that would make it possible to achieve a just and lasting peace to the crisis affecting our country, in strict compliance with the principles laid down by the President of Mali — namely, respect for Mali's territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and unified, democratic and secular nature.

Let me recall that, at all stages of the inclusive inter-Malian talks, the Malian Government has organized campaigns to raise the awareness of Mali's stakeholders, including political parties, civil society, community leaders, refugees and displaced persons, armed and security forces, with a view to obtaining the massive support of the population for the process. That is why, after initialing the agreement, Malians, in a broad public movement, formed a national alliance for peace and unity in Mali, and organized huge marches in all the major cities of the country to show their commitment to peace, and to demand the signature of the agreement by all parties. The Malian Government initialed the agreement, with the strong support of the vast majority of Malians, who only aspire to peace. We have launched a momentum that we should not squander. Yes, Malians are ready for peace. They are tired of war. They want to turn this dark page in the history of our nation, which is united and indivisible. They want to move forward. They want to be heard. They want, above all, to be understood and respected.

As I speak, exactly 40 days after the initialling of the draft agreement, it is clear that the Coordination still has not initialed the compromise document, in spite of the commitment made on 9 June 2014 in Algiers, to peacefully resolve the conflict in northern Mali through a comprehensive and final peace agreement with the Government of Mali; but also in spite of the numerous appeals by this Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council; and moreover, in spite of the 17 March visit to Kidal by the international mediation to bring the Coordination into the peace process, and ask it to assume its responsibility.

Members will agree when I say that the refusal to initial and sign an agreement reached at the end of an inclusive process carries huge risks for peace in Mali, throughout the region and beyond. It creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to building the confidence so vital to all stakeholders in order to pursue the peace process; it paves the way for unhealthy initiatives that could jeopardize what has been so carefully built over eight long months of negotiations. The Coordination's refusal to initial the draft agreement also promotes the attempts of terrorist groups and drug traffickers to destabilize northern Mali, the

entire Sahel region, and beyond. That can be seen in terrorist attacks, as mentioned earlier by Mr. Ladsous. The terrorist attacks perpetrated for the first time in Bamako on 7 March caused the loss of five lives; there were also attacks and abuses perpetrated in the towns of Gao, Kidal, Nampala, Boni, Diafarabé, M'Boullikessi, Dialloubé, and elsewhere, with numerous casualties that included Malians and non-nationals, civilians and members of the military.

I must say that the negotiation process was also marked by direct and indirect consultations with all Malian stakeholders, sometimes without the mediation. Some direct discussions often took place in our hotel rooms very late at night or early in the morning, as well as in the corridors. I should point out that it was not the Government of Mali that put an end to negotiations. The mediation, after having listened at length to all the Malian stakeholders, including civil society, proposed the initialed draft as a dynamic and balanced compromise to permanently resolve the current crisis in our country. We welcome the courage and spirit of compromise of our brothers and sisters from the Platform of movements and the self-defence groups, which clearly chose unity and peace for our country. We believe that many of our brothers and sisters from the Coordination of movements only want peace. They have told us as much, and we believe in their good faith. However, their voices can barely be heard alongside those few radicals who, for ulterior motives and through stalling tactics and prevarication, want to obstruct peace.

The Security Council and good will should help those who want peace to make their choice with courage and to make it known. We ardently appeal to the Coordination of movements to seize this historic opportunity to make peace. The first step is to initial and sign the draft agreement for peace and reconciliation because there is no alternative to peace. Neither is there an alternative to this agreement, which, after all, is only a framework for the parties' ongoing commitment. It is therefore unacceptable that the peace process in Mali, the hope of 15 million Malians, should be held hostage by a group of radical, extremist individuals. Those who, despite all, choose to obstruct the path to peace leave the international community no choice but to isolate them and to treat them as such by imposing sanctions on them in conformity with the 6 February statement of the Security Council (S/PRST/2015/5). We therefore welcome all initiatives intended to encourage our brothers in the Coordination to become part of the movement and to ensure that in the month of April, the decision is made to initial and sign the agreement.

In that regard, we are encouraged by the announcement made by Algeria of the initialling ceremony by the Coordination of movements, scheduled for 15 April in Algiers. We hope that it will lead quickly and without precondition to the signing by all parties of the agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali. I wish to stress that such must take place without prior conditions.

The status quo raises the issue of national, subregional, regional and even international security. We ask that the Security Council not be distracted by the radical wing of the Coordination, which manipulates the public to make it seem as if they have rejected the agreement. Today, the international community, similarly to what it has done in other regions, should make every effort to eradicate the terrorists, drug traffickers and forces hostile to the peace agreement in Mali. The work already begun in that vain should be completed.

I have come before the Security Council to make several requests. First, I call on the Council to endorse the agreement initialed on 1 March, as the African Union Peace and Security Council did in its communiqué of 27 March in Addis Ababa, a copy of which has been circulated.

Secondly, I call on the Council to lend its full support to the agreement initialed with France at Algiers on 1 March in the framework of the mediation.

Thirdly, I would like the Council to continue to exert the necessary pressure to bring the Coordination of Movements to sign off on the agreement without delay, prior to its signing at Bamako in April, and, if need be, to consider measures including those set out in the 6 February presidential statement, namely, targeted sanctions against those who impede the Algiers peace process. I emphasize that I am referring to obstacles here, as we are not calling for sanctions for those who have not signed off on the agreement. That is not the goal. Those who have not signed off on the agreement can take their time, and consultations can continue to convince them to do so before the train leaves the station, which must then be able to move at a sustained pace. I am talking about those who have not signed off and who are going to oppose the agreement's implementation — and it is up to Governments, the

international community and the mediation to take the necessary response.

Finally, I came to ask the Council not to condone any resumption of talks in Algiers — under any guise — for the simple reason that such an option is unacceptable to my Government and the international mediation, for it runs the risk of setting a very dangerous precedent for the Security Council. I take this opportunity to reiterate that the Government of Mali has never closed the door to dialogue with our brothers in Coordination, or with any of our other brothers willing to extend a hand in peace. But for us and for the mediation, the negotiations are completed. One must therefore face reality, and all efforts must now aim for the implementation of the agreement. Against that backdrop, the Government of Mali has begun to take various steps towards implementation. Regional development agencies have been set up in the context of the regionalization provided for in the agreement; the date of municipal elections has been postponed to ensure the participation of all communities in the local polls; and awareness-raising campaigns about the agreement have been conducted in all regions of the country, as well as in Bamako and in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that we are at a crucial stage of the Algiers process. The Government of Mali has assumed all of its responsibilities by committing itself to the peace process in good faith. The Platform of Movements has done the same. The international mediation, led by Algeria, has unanimously initialed the agreement. France has also initialed, as I just said, and the United States of America has made a statement in support.

We welcome the unity of action of the international mediation, which continues to be essential to the success of the peace process in Mali. In turn, today the Security Council must face up to its responsibilities. The eyes of the Malian people are on the Council. And the countries of the region and those throughout the world that love peace and justice are watching the Council as well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.